



Steven Bellone
County Executive

THE SUFFOLK COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION



2012 ANNUAL REPORT

RABBI DR. STEVEN A. MOSS
CHAIRPERSON

JENNIFER BLASKE, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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THE SUFFOLK COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Jennifer Blaske, Esq., Executive Director

Lorena Gonzalez, Investigator

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www.SuffolkHumanRights.org

COMMISSION MEMBERS

The Suffolk County Human Rights Commission was created in 1963 pursuant to New York State's General Municipal Law. The Commission has a paid staff including an Executive Director, Investigators and Clerical staff who carry out the investigations and other work of the agency. It also consists of fifteen Commission members, whose role is to set policy for the agency and to advocate for equality for all Suffolk residents. These fifteen dedicated individuals, who are appointed by the County Executive and approved by the Suffolk County Legislature, volunteer their time to serve on the Commission for three year terms. Many members have served several consecutive terms, and each has remained active and committed.

We are proud of the talented and diverse group of individuals who make room in their busy lives to commit themselves to the work of human rights.

RABBI DR. STEVEN A. MOSS, CHAIRPERSON, was appointed to the Human Rights Commission in 1992. Rabbi Moss has served at the B'nai Israel Reform Temple in Oakdale as its spiritual leader since 1972. He was initially appointed Chairperson of the County's Anti-Bias Task Force by former County Executive Patrick Halpin, and has been appointed Chair (and later Co-Chair) of the Task Force for each of the subsequent years by County Executives Robert Gaffney and Steve Levy. He serves as Deputy Chief of Chaplains for the Suffolk County Police Department, the Chiefs of Police Association, the Police Association, and serves as chaplain to many local hospitals and senior facilities. He received his undergraduate degree from New York University, and his graduate degrees and ordination from the Hebrew Union College in New York. He was the recipient of the District Attorney's Distinguished Citizen Award, and Chaplain of the Year 1987 and Rabbi of the Year 2007 awards, given by the New York Board of Rabbis. In 2009, he received the Lehman-LaGuardia Award for Civic Achievement. In 2003, he was appointed to the Board of the Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity, and Human Understanding. He is the longest sitting member of the Islip Town Board of Ethics. He is Chair of the Islip Town Anti-Bias Task Force and Vice Chair of the Suffolk Center for the Holocaust, Diversity and Human Understanding.

LYNDA PERDOMO-AYALA, LMSW, VICE CHAIR, was appointed to the Commission in 2002 and was elected Vice Chair in 2003. She is a graduate of Adelphi University, the School of Social Welfare at Stony Brook University, and holds a certification in conflict resolution from Cornell University. Ms. Perdomo-Ayala is the Administrator to the Department of Pharmacological Sciences at Stony Brook University's Medical Center. At Stony Brook, she also serves as advisor to the Latin American Student Organization, is a member and Chair of the advisory board of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center, is a member of the Multicultural Woman's Alliance and serves as a member of President Stanley's Diversity Council. She has worked extensively in the community as a member of the National Association of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Social Workers, the National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc., and the Suffolk County Executive's Hispanic Advisory Board, and she is a board member, former President, and currently Treasurer of the Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk, Inc. Ms. Perdomo-Ayala has received many awards and honors, including the "Woman of Distinction" Award from La Union de Mujeres Americanas in Puerto Rico, and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Bethel AME Church of Setauket for her outstanding service and commitment to the community. Most recently, she received recognition from Stony Brook University for her 25 years of service to the institution. She was a recipient of the New York State Social Worker of the Month Award, and was named Local Hero by Bank of America and Distinguished Social Worker by the National Association of Social Workers, and the Latino Social Work Task Force. In 2011, she was honored with a Special Recognition Award by Adelante of

Suffolk County, Inc., for their 45th Puerto Rican/Hispanic Day Parade. In addition, she was recently appointed to represent the Human Rights Commission on the Suffolk County Women's Advisory Commission serving the women of Suffolk County. She is an educator, mentor, and a committed Activist for all underserved communities, and as Vice Chair of the Commission, she heads its Administrative Committee which oversees the following committees: Justice, Awards Dinner, Education, Employment, Health, Housing, Immigration and Junior Human Rights.

MICHELLE BONNIE CANNON was appointed to the Commission in September, 2012. A graduate of Howard University, Ms. Cannon is the Executive Director of the Bridgehampton Child Care & Recreational Center. She has served as Director since 2007. She also served a six-year term as Trustee on the Southampton Village Board. She was the first African-American elected as Trustee in the Village of Southampton. Ms. Cannon is active in the community and has served on several community and civic boards. She currently serves as chairperson on the Town of Southampton Housing Authority Board. She also is a member The League of Women Voters, Southampton Village Cultural Center board, NAACP, (Eastern Long Island Branch), and Jack & Jill of America (Suffolk County Branch).

RACHEL LEE DAVIS, appointed to the Commission in 1998, served as Vice Chair for over two years. She earned a B.S. Degree from Alcorn State University, Mississippi, an M.A. Degree, Secondary Education, from New York University; and holds NY State Certification in Health Education, Science, and Social Studies. Mrs. Davis has a record of service with the American Cancer Society, the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation, the Heart and Diabetes Associations, and the Uganda Children's "Tour of Light" which raises money for AIDS awareness. She is the Founding Vice Chair of The Witness Project L.I., Breast Cancer in African American Women, L.I. Cancer Care, and also a Trustee of SUNY's Old Westbury College Foundation, Inc., founder/first President of Eastern Shore, The Links, Inc.; co-founder/first President, Sigma Psi Omega, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; past board Chair of Benincasa Family Services, Inc., Amityville, N.Y.; a member of the NAACP; and founding officer of the Coalition of 100 Black Women Suffolk County. She has received numerous awards for leadership and humanitarian services, including the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Meritorious Service Award, First Baptist Church of Riverhead; "Paving the Way To Success", A Leader Making A Difference, American Diabetes Association; Partners in Preaching Leadership, Sisters of St. Dominic, Amityville, N.Y.; Outstanding Woman in the Town of Babylon; Frederick Douglas Memorial Award, Islip Chapter L.I. Council of African American Republicans; the 2007 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drum Major Award, and the National Outstanding Secondary Educators of America Award. She was elected 2007 trustee of Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, Alabama; received the 2009 Suffolk County Republican Women's Political Volunteer Award; and the 2010 New York State Senate's Woman of Distinction Award. Mrs. Davis is an active member of St. Mary's Church in Amityville, and is a member of the Commission's Housing, Education, and Health Committees.

MICHELE T. DEL MONTE was reappointed to the Commission in April 2002, having previously served from 1993 to 1997. Ms. Del Monte's background, training and experience are in public policy, health sciences, education and human services – including advocacy on aging, disability, health, housing and poverty issues. She serves on the Board of the Middle Country Library Foundation, the Renewal Resources Board, and the Long Island Task Force on Literacy. In 2006, she was the recipient of Suffolk Community Council's Maxine Postal Human Dignity Award, and helped the Council establish a Network of Women with Disabilities to increase access to health care through print material, health literacy, and physical accessibility to health providers' offices. Ms. Del Monte is an active member of the Commission's Awards, Education, Health, Housing, Immigration and

Junior Human Rights Committees, and chairs the Employment Committee. Ms. Del Monte is a past member of the Insurance Committee of the Suffolk County Minority Health Action Coalition and the Diversity Committee of the Association of Fund Raising Professionals of LI. She represents the Commission on the Suffolk County Women's Advisory Council. Ms. Del Monte is a member of the Community Leaders Advisory Committee of the Stony Brook University Medical Center, and the President's Multi-Cultural Advisory Council at SUNY Stony Brook. In September 2010, Ms. Del Monte became a Literacy Volunteer and currently tutors three adult learners at her local community library.

MARK J. EPSTEIN, ESQ. was appointed to the Commission in 2008. Mr. Epstein is a partner in the law firm of Pazer, Epstein & Jaffe, P.C. He earned a B.S. degree from The American University and his J.D. from New York Law School. He is admitted to practice law in New York, New Jersey and the District of Columbia. His memberships include the Suffolk County Bar Association, Nassau County Bar Association, New York County Lawyers Association, American Association for Justice, Huntington Lawyers Club, Jewish Lawyers of Nassau County and he sits on the Board of the New York State Trial Lawyers Association. He is also a representative to the Long Island Rail Road Commuters Council and the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA. Mr. Epstein is also a member of the Long Island Association and the Huntington Township Chamber of Commerce. He is a strong advocate of civil and human rights and has been awarded the B'nai B'rith Humanitarian Award. Mr. Epstein serves on the Commission's Administration of Justice Committee.

AUGUSTUS G. MANTIA, M.D., appointed to the Commission in 1998, is an Associate Professor of Medicine, Family Practice and Psychiatry at Stony Brook University. Dr. Mantia has had a clinical practice in the Smithtown Community for over 30 years, and he is a strong proponent of equality in health care. In 2005, Dr. Mantia, in conjunction with Stony Brook University and the First Baptist Church of Riverhead, received a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for Project Care, a program to develop computer home monitoring for chronic medical conditions. Dr. Mantia was also appointed to the NY State Department of Health's Medicaid Advisory Committee by the NY State Senate and Governor George Pataki. Dr. Mantia volunteers his time to serve his community as the Hauppauge Volunteer Fire Department's Surgeon who oversees all medical response and protocols for the Emergency Medical Response Teams and defibrillator programs. In July 2008, Dr. Mantia was appointed as a Deputy Fire Coordinator-Medical Doctor for the County of Suffolk. In 2008, he was also selected for appointment to the position of Critical Incident Police Surgeon for the Suffolk County Police Department. His appointment followed successful completion of critical training in FEMA Incident Management, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Police Department field operations and protocols, and certification as a Field Physician by the Suffolk County Department of Health Division of EMS. Dr. Mantia has been acknowledged as a "Hometown Humanitarian" by the Suffolk County Legislature and was named the 2012 Physician of Excellence by the Suffolk Regional Emergency Medical Services Council. Dr. Mantia serves as Co-Chair of the Health Committee and chair of the Commission's Housing Committee.

GARY R. MAR, PH.D., appointed to the Commission in 2005, is a Professor of Philosophy at Stony Brook University, where he teaches logic, philosophy of mathematics, philosophy of religion, and Asian American philosophy. Founder and director of the Asian American Center, he was a catalyst for the Charles B. Wang Asian American Center, which was established at that time by the largest private donation in the history of the public education system in NY State. Dr. Mar has been an advocate for and active teacher of Asian American studies at Stony Brook University since 1995 and serves on a number of community organizations, including being a member of the advisory board of the Council for Prejudice Reduction, the VP of Education for the Organization of Chinese

Americans, Long Island, and a Vice Chair of the Community Advisory Board for Public Television Stations WNET13/WLIW21. Dr. Mar was also the founder and first president of the Asian American Faculty Staff Association and is currently chair of the American Philosophical Association (APA) Committee on the status of Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies. He has been a recipient of the Outstanding Professor Award from the Alumni Association at Stony Brook, the President's and Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching from SUNY, and the Pew Foundation Evangelical Scholar's Fellowship. In 2005, he was honored with a Civil Advocacy Achievement Award from the Organization of Chinese Americans, Long Island, and has administered grants to conduct workshops on hate crimes from the Allstate Foundation and the Organization of Chinese Americans, an Asian American civil rights advocacy group based in Washington, DC. Dr. Mar chairs the Commission's Education Committee and is also a member of the Immigration Committee.

CAROLYN G. PEABODY, PH. D., L.C.S.W., A.C.S.W., is Assistant Dean for East End Initiatives and Clinical Associate Professor at the School of Social Welfare, Stony Brook University. Dr. Peabody earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Fordham University in 1978, her Master of Social Work Degree from Stony Brook University in 1986 and her Doctorate in Sociology from Stony Brook University in 1998. She was appointed to the Commission in 1997 and is the Commission's liaison to the Southold Town Anti-Bias Task Force. Throughout her career, Dr. Peabody has worked to fight inequality and to support the empowerment of disenfranchised, stigmatized and oppressed individuals and communities. As a graduate student, she did her internship with the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission and the Sayville Project, an advocacy/empowerment community based program that assists people who have been involved in the public mental health system. Dr. Peabody was awarded a National Institute of Mental Health Traineeship and Clinical Training Fellowship which supported her work training and developing an advocacy/empowerment practice curriculum for graduate social work students working in the public mental health system. Dr. Peabody joined the faculty of Stony Brook University's School of Social Welfare in 1989. Since that time, Dr. Peabody has chaired and served on many committees and working groups charged with working for human and civil rights. For example, she served as the advisor to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Social Worker Caucus, she co-chaired the Suffolk County and NYS NASW Lesbian & Gay Issues Committee, co-chaired the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Faculty Staff Network and served on the Steering Committee for the President Clinton's Initiative on Race at Stony Brook. She served on the University President's Advisory Council on Diversity. Dr. Peabody also has served in various leadership capacities with community-based anti-bias organizations. She has served as chair and Vice-Chair the Southold Town Anti-Bias Task Force and as Co-Chair of the Administration of Justice Committee of the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission. In addition, Dr. Peabody has maintained a psychotherapy practice for the last 15 years, working predominantly with women and lesbians. She lives with Diane, her partner and recent spouse of 26 years in Orient Point, NY. She has 2 stepsons, David, a social work administrator with a large agency serving the greater New York area and Eric, a paralegal, part-time film maker and film festival organizer.

RAJESHWAR PRASAD was appointed to the Commission in 1999. Mr. Prasad is a former executive in the field of health planning, development and implementation with various nonprofit organizations, last being Long Island Cancer Council where he served as Principal Investigator and Executive Director. He is an active volunteer associated with many nonprofit groups, such as the India Association of Long Island since its inception in 1976 (past President), National Indo-American Association for Senior Citizens (NIAASC), currently serving as its Executive Director (also a voluntary position). In 2009, he led a conference at the GOPIO (Global Organization of People of Indian Origin) convention on "The Living Pioneers – A Global Perspective of India Elders."

Mr. Prasad served on the Health Panel of the Allocation Committee of the United Way of Long Island (Vice Chair) for over 19 years, until 2003. In 2009, he was recognized for his community services by the then Nassau County Executive at the India American Night in Eisenhower Park, sponsored by the Indo American Forum.” In 2011, Mr. Prasad was given a proclamation by the Suffolk County Executive for his significant contributions to the enhancement of our region: the occasion was the celebration of DIWALI (India’s Festival of Lights) by the Office of Minority Affairs of Suffolk County. At the Chicago convention of the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), an umbrella association of about 200 entities, he was elected to serve as Regional Vice President for New York in October 2012. NFIA has 12 regions in the United States. Mr. Prasad came to the United States in 1969 after a one-year stay in Paris, France on an exchange program, and has been a resident of Suffolk County since 1971. He is an active member of the Commission’s Justice Committee and chairs the Immigration Committee.

HAFIZ UR REHMAN, MD FAAP was appointed to the Commission by County Executive Steve Bellone in 2012. Dr. Rehman is a Pediatrician in Bay Shore and a senior Attending in the Dept. of Pediatrics at Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center and Southside Hospital. He is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the School of Medicine at Hofstra University and was an Assistant Clinical Professor at the New York Institute of Technology NYCOM School of Medicine. Dr. Rehman is a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatrics and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. He is a Past President of the Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA) and the past Chairman of IMANA's Board of Regents. He has also served as the Chairman of IMANA RELIEF and continues to be a Member of that Committee. Dr. Rehman is a past President of Masjid Darul Quran - The Muslim Center of Long Island (the largest Mosque on Long Island) and presently, is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Mosque. He has been a past President of the Islamic Association of Long Island - the Selden Mosque. Dr. Rehman is a Member of the Suffolk County Inter-faith Anti-Bias Task Force and the Town of Islip Anti-Bias Task Force. He is a member of the Bay Shore Interfaith Council, and an Honorary Board Member of the Suffolk County Coalition against Domestic Violence. Dr. Rehman was a recipient of the Suffolk County Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Public Service Award. He also has received Suffolk County Community College's Salute to Excellence Community Service Award. In 2012, he was awarded the Ghandi Award by the Shanti Fund. Dr. Rehman has also received the Bharat Guruv "Pride of India" Award. Dr. Rehman was also appointed to the American Muslim Advisory Board to the County Executive as well as the Public Advisory Board to the Suffolk County Commissioner of Police. Dr. Rehman serves as a Board Member of FOF Relief and Education with relief activities in Asia and Africa. He is also on the Board of the Muslim Foundation of America. Dr. Rehman believes that "The enjoyment of Human Rights is not exclusively for any select people or race BUT for all the Human beings who inhabit the planet. I see a basic goodness in each and every person that encourages me to work for them."

LUIS E. RODRIGUEZ, ESQ., is a partner at the law offices of Goldstein & Rodriguez, LLP since 2007. He earned a B.S. in Accounting from S.U.N.Y. College at Old Westbury in the year 2000. He received his Juris Doctor from Touro Law in 2005. He is a Member of the Nassau Lawyers Association, Nassau County Bar Association, New York State Bar Association and the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association.

LUIS VALENZUELA, PH.D. was appointed to the Commission in 2012. He has over 25 years of experience as an advocate in non-profit organizations. He is currently employed by the Healthcare Education Project of the Greater New York Hospital Association & 1199 SEIU. In his capacity as a Healthcare Advocate, Luis works to improve healthcare in New York State through education,

grassroots organizing and coalition-building. As a Clinical Associate Professor at the School of Social Welfare SUNY Stony Brook, Dr. Valenzuela helps to prepare new social work professionals. In his role as the Executive Director of the Long Island Immigrant Alliance (LIIA), Dr. Valenzuela has worked with an alliance of some 50 charitable, religious, labor, civil rights and immigrant organizations in Nassau and Suffolk Counties that are concerned with ensuring that Long Island provides a welcoming environment for immigrants and invites their involvement in the cultural, socio-economic and political life of their community. Dr. Valenzuela is the Vice Chair of the New York Immigration Coalition and past President of the National Association of Puerto Rican Hispanic Social Workers (NAPRHSW). He is active in many community organizations including: NASW (National Association of Social Workers), Jobs With Justice LI, The Latino Jewish Coalition, Long Island WINS, SUNY Stony Brook President's Multicultural Advisory Board, The Health & Welfare Council, Community Advocates, Molloy College President's Multicultural Advisory, The Long Island Organizing Network (LION), College of Advisors for Erase Racism, and the Nassau Suffolk Hispanic Legislative Task Force. Over the years, Dr. Valenzuela has received recognition from many prestigious organizations, as well as local and state government and congressional recognition for his service to the community. Dr. Valenzuela completed his social work studies at SUNY Stony Brook School of Social Welfare and at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Services. Dr. Valenzuela is also a graduate of the Energeia Partnership Regional Stewards Leadership Program, and a CORO Leadership Fellow. Dr. Valenzuela enjoys spending time with his wife Deborah, his adult children and grandchildren.

DIONNE WALKER-BELGRAVE, MBA, CCDP/AP, was appointed as a member of the Commission in April 2011 and is a diversity and compliance consultant and President of DWB Associates. Dionne was one of the first professionals to receive her Diversity Certification CCDP/AP, from Cornell and also holds a Management Development Certificate from Harvard University. Ms. Walker-Belgrave received an M.B.A. in Finance from Adelphi University, and a B.S. in Business from SUNY New Paltz. Before founding her own consulting business, she held positions in the Long Island area as Assistant Dean of Students, Director of Affirmative Action/Equity and Diversity, Director of Financial Aid and Financial Auditor and Budget Analyst. She conducts training seminars and lectures locally and abroad on Global Diversity, Affirmative Action, Financial Aid and College Admissions and Scholarships. Ms. Walker-Belgrave was the recipient of the Long Island Urban League's Trail Blazer Award, and has been recognized by many area organizations for her dedication and leadership. She has taken leadership roles in various mentoring programs, community-based organizations and educational initiatives. Throughout the years, she has been an active participant and supporter of many civic, cultural and educational organizations including, but not limited to, the American Association for Affirmative Action, New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association, Long Island Next Generation Housing Committee, Erase Racism, Jack and Jill of America, Inc., the Long Island Urban League and in 2011 she was appointed to the County Executive's African-American Advisory Board. She also chaired New York State's Regional Affirmative Action Officers. Ms. Walker-Belgrave is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and she is a member and former Trustee of Living Hope Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church, where she also served as Christian Education leader and is currently the External Affairs Liaison.

DR. YU-WAN WANG has more than twenty-five years of work experience that literally spans the globe. A product of China's Cultural Revolution, she learned early about the importance of education and the need to take risks to satisfy intellectual desire. Dr. Wang holds a B.S. in Business Administration, a Masters of Library and Information Science, and an Ed.D. Dr. Wang, who was born in Northern China, gained corporate and academic experience in the United States and in

Taiwan. Her corporate experience includes serving as an information coordinator for McKinsey & Co. There, she prioritized client services information requests from around the world. Later she went on to serve as a Consultant for the Taipei City government where she defined the role and direction of the International Commission, formulated strategic plans and directed international programs. After serving as the Director of a library in Pennsylvania, Dr. Wang became an Instructor at Fu-Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. From 2002-2009 she was Director of International Student & Scholar Services at Dowling College. Currently, Dr. Wang is Associate Dean for International Admissions at Stony Brook University. Dr. Wang's memberships and professional activities include a Fulbright Life Membership, Association of International Educators (NAFSA), Rotary International and Women's International Network. She is also the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, and a Woman of the Year award from the Islip Town Council.

MISSION STATEMENT

It shall be the duty of the Commission . . .

To foster mutual respect and understanding among all groups in the community, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

To make such studies in any field of human relationship in the community as, in the judgment of the Commission, will aid in effectuating its general purposes and, where desirable, to make the results of such studies public.

To inquire into incidents of tension and conflict among or between various groups arising out of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation and to take such action as may be designated to alleviate such tensions and conflicts.

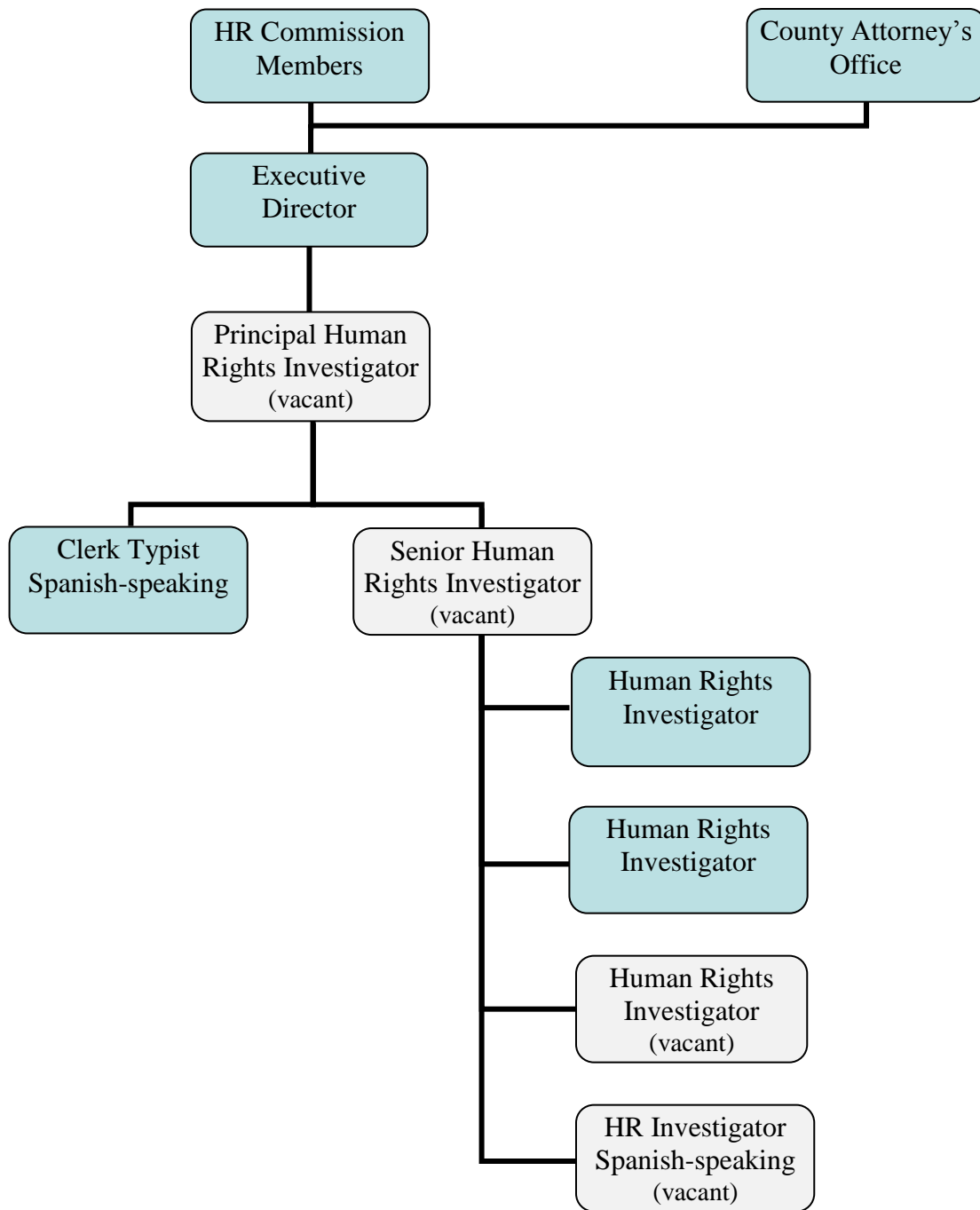
To conduct and recommend such educational programs as, in the judgment of the Commission, will increase goodwill among inhabitants of the community and open new opportunities into all phases of community life for all inhabitants.

To receive, accept, use, administer, and expend public grants and private gifts, donations, or bequests and other payments, goods, and services when authorized by local law or resolution of the County Legislature.

To investigate complaints and to report them to the New York State Division of Human Rights and/or to other public bodies so empowered, and investigate such cases alleging unlawful discrimination practices under Article 15 of the New York State Executive Law and related anti-discrimination laws.

To issue and promulgate such rules and regulations as it shall deem necessary and appropriate for the purpose of establishing procedures for the enforcement of Human Rights Local Law.

Suffolk County Human Rights Commission Organizational Chart



THE WORK OF OUR AGENCY

There are two key methods the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission (SCHRC) uses to further its mission to prevent and eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote goodwill among the county's increasingly diverse residents.

First, the Commission attempts to conciliate or resolve every complaint of discrimination filed to the benefit of all parties concerned. Where conciliation or early resolution is not possible, the Commission's highly trained investigators act diligently to gather evidence to support a finding on the merits. By maintaining working relationships with other agencies that enforce anti-discrimination legislation at the state and federal levels, duplication of services is avoided. Suffolk County residents do not have to travel into New York City to file a federal charge, because they can file both a state and federal charge right here at the SCHRC offices in Hauppauge or Riverhead.

It is vitally important to have effective local enforcement of anti-discrimination laws by a staff familiar with local issues and concerns. The importance of providing personal and timely service to those in distress, many of whom have lost their livelihoods, cannot be underestimated. The Commission prides itself not only on its ability to process complaints within a concise timeframe, but also on its impartiality, level of professionalism, and the thoroughness of its investigations.

The second way we further our mission is through community outreach and by providing technical assistance to organizations and individuals to encourage voluntary compliance with the law. The Commission actively works to promote positive intergroup relations and to prevent racial tensions and community conflict related to bigotry and intolerance. We continue to work closely with businesses, government agencies, schools, private organizations, and community groups to foster equal opportunity. We provide training on various topics related to discrimination and the human rights law and staff is available to help employers and business owners who contact us with questions related to discrimination, to assist them in understanding how to remain in compliance with the law.

THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS

INTAKE

The first step in the process is Intake. Individuals who believe that they have been discriminated against may telephone, write, email, or come into our office and speak to an investigator about their situation. An extensive intake interview is conducted to obtain all the pertinent facts, explain our process and advise the complainant of available options.

Unlike some other government agencies, the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission is a neutral fact-finding agency and is not an advocate for those who have filed charges. While the Commission respects the fact that those individuals who make allegations believe they have been discriminated against, in order for the Commission to determine probable cause, there must be evidence to show that the alleged discriminatory basis was the reason for the respondent's actions. The complainant's belief alone is not sufficient to establish that.

INFORMAL INQUIRY

Often, a situation arises that is not within SCHRC's area of jurisdiction. In those situations, our staff members carefully evaluate the information and make appropriate referrals to other agencies that can better serve the individual's immediate needs.

In other instances, the problem can be resolved without the need for a formal complaint. A great number of our cases never have to go to a formal filing. At the local level, we have the flexibility to attempt to clarify the situation and/or to settle the matter by sending a letter of inquiry to the respondent and subsequent conversations with both parties. This method is very effective in weeding out complaints that have little or no merit or which turn out to be non-jurisdictional. On the other hand, cases that present strong evidence early on to substantiate the complainant's allegations can often be settled quickly, to the benefit of both parties.

COMPLAINT FILED

When the situation cannot be resolved informally, or when the individual wishes to file a formal complaint, the intake investigator will secure all relevant information available from the individual and draft a formal complaint for the complainant's notarized signature. Depending upon the circumstances of the complaint, these formal charges may be filed under local, state, and/or federal law. The complaint is served on the respondent by mail, along with a request for necessary records and documentation.

RESPONDENT'S ANSWER and COMPLAINANT'S REBUTTAL

The respondent has fifteen days to file a formal answer to the charges. The Commission will grant reasonable extensions of time under certain circumstances.

Once received, the answer filed by the respondent is usually sent to the complainant, along with a request for their written rebuttal. If the complainant has difficulty, they are encouraged to meet with the investigator to give a verbal rebuttal. The rebuttal process can also be undertaken by telephone or by e-mail.

INVESTIGATION

Every complainant is offered the opportunity to show that the alleged discriminatory basis was the reason for the respondent's actions. However, the Commission ultimately determines the level of investigation necessary to address the issues raised.

The investigation includes securing relevant documents and obtaining other pertinent data necessary to address the charges. Relevant witnesses are contacted and interviewed about the circumstances surrounding the complaint. Their statements can be a valuable tool in ascertaining the validity of a charge.

Although the Commission has subpoena power, this power is rarely, if ever, used. In our experience, most respondents are cooperative and those that are not usually send the requested documents once they learn that a subpoena will be forthcoming if they do not.

FACT-FINDING CONFERENCE

In some cases, the next step of the investigation is a two party fact-finding conference. At the conference, the Commission identifies disputed points and determines what additional evidence is necessary to resolve those issues. A fact-finding conference is not a formal hearing, but the parties are informed that all information gathered at the conference will be used to evaluate the merits of the complaint. Attorneys from both sides are permitted to be present, but may not answer questions for their clients, who are expected to respond directly to the Commission's questions.

In some instances, the investigation produces sufficient evidence through site visits, witness interviews and documentary evidence, rendering a fact-finding conference unnecessary.

VOLUNTARY SETTLEMENT

The Commission always encourages early and ongoing settlement efforts, which benefit both parties. The respondent benefits by avoiding lengthy, potentially expensive litigation, which can run into hundreds of thousands of dollars, even if they prevail. The complainant receives the benefit of settlement without having to wait years for resolution of their complaint. They also avoid the expense of attorney's fees and avoid the risk of losing the case and getting nothing in the end.

RECOMMENDED FINDING

When the investigation is completed, the information that has been gathered is carefully analyzed and documented, and the investigator prepares an investigative report along with recommended findings.

FINDINGS

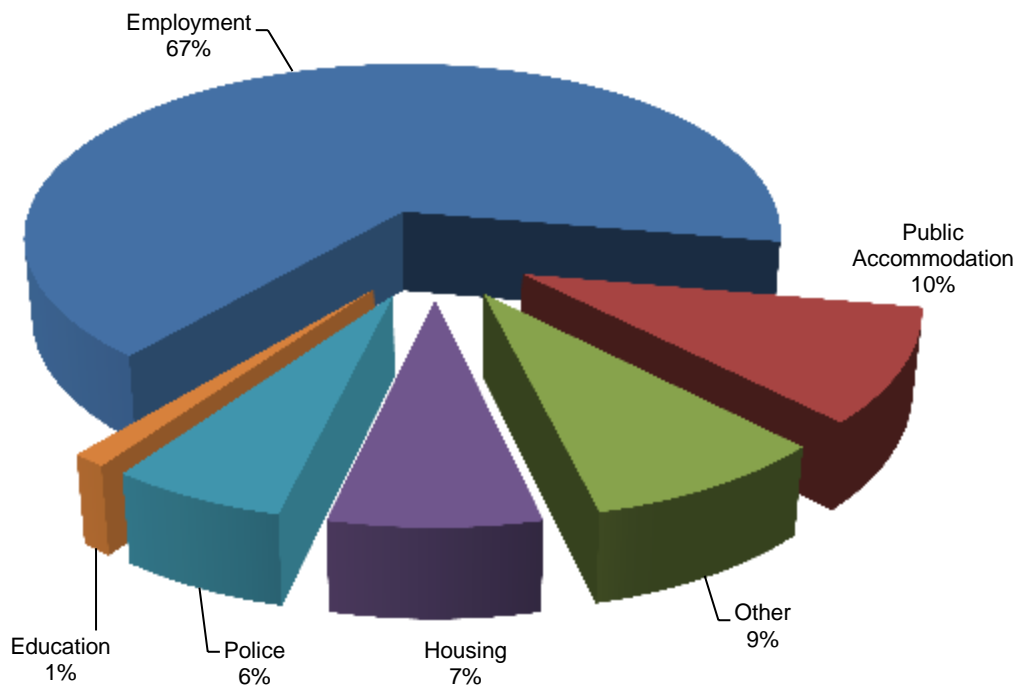
The executive director reviews the file and the investigative report, and if she agrees with the findings, she signs off on the report. The Commission's recommended findings are then submitted to the NY State Division of Human Rights, who will either concur or reverse the findings of the Commission. (It is very rare that the state does not concur with our findings.) If the State Division concurs with our "no probable cause" finding, then the case is closed. If they concur with a "probable cause" finding, the case is scheduled for a formal public hearing before an administrative law judge. The administrative law judge has the authority to compel the respondent to make restitution to the complainant, in whatever amount the judge deems appropriate.

In housing cases filed under the county's local law, however, the Commission issues the final determination. Where probable cause has been determined, a hearing before an administrative law judge will be held at the county level, and fines may also be imposed.

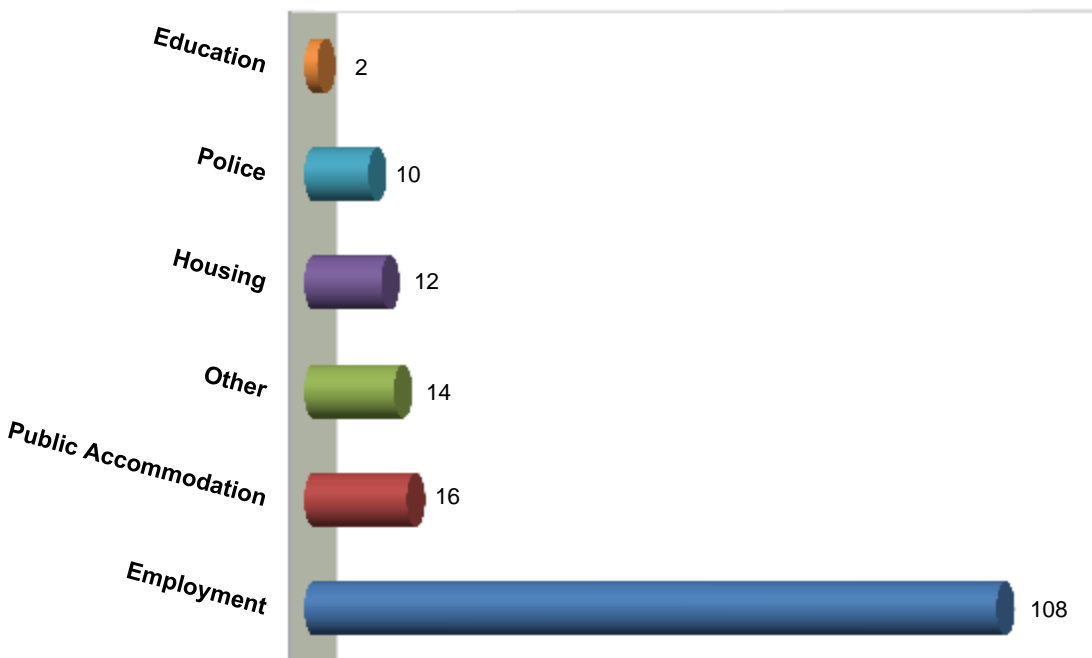
APPEAL

If it is determined that there is no probable cause to believe that an unlawful act of discrimination has occurred, then the complaint is dismissed and the party is provided with information explaining the timeframes and process for filing an appeal in court.

Cases Opened by Jurisdictional Area - 2012

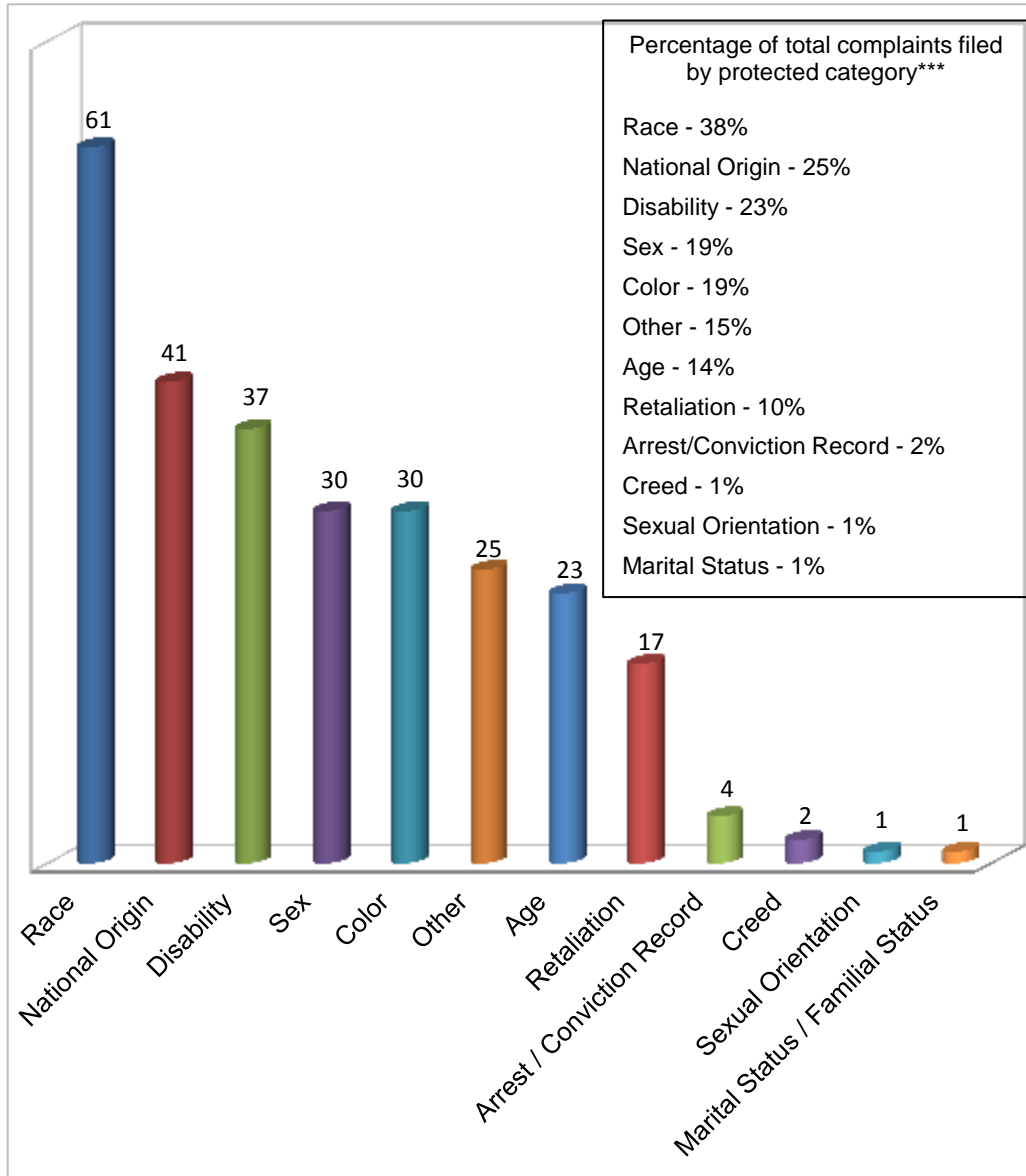


Actual number of cases opened



Protected Categories - 2012

Number of complaints filed under each category protected by law



***The percentages total over 100% because individuals often file a complaint under more than one protected category.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION INVESTIGATIVE STATISTICS 2012

Telephone Contacts:.....	2306
Mail and Email Inquiries:.....	61
Personal Interviews:.....	159
TOTAL REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE:	2526

TOTAL CASES OPENED	162
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<u>Jurisdictional Area:</u>	
Employment.....	108
Public Accommodation.....	16
Education.....	2
Housing.....	12
Credit.....	0
Volunteer Fire Department.....	0
Police.....	10
Correctional Facility.....	0
Other.....	14
<u>Protected Categories:</u>	
Sex.....	30
Race.....	61
Color.....	30
Age.....	23
National Origin.....	41
Disability.....	37
Creed.....	2
Arrest / Conviction Record.....	4
Marital Status/Familial Status.....	1
Sexual Orientation.....	1
Military Status.....	0
Domestic Violence Victim	0
Retaliation.....	17
Other.....	25

TOTAL CASES CLOSED:	147
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<u>Reasons for Closings:</u>	
Insufficient basis for complaint.....	28
Trans. to NYSDHR pursuant to MOU	1
Complainant failed to pursue.....	18
Determined to be non-jurisdictional.....	31
Complaint withdrawn.....	11
Conciliated.....	9
"No Probable Cause"	15
"Probable Cause"	15
Complainant pursuing in Federal Court.....	0
Withdrawn w/ Benefits.....	1
Duplicate Filing	11
Other.....	7

2012 HOUSING CASES

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOUSING-RELATED INQUIRIES - 77

65 of those were non-jurisdictional (questions about Section 8, landlord/tenant problems, emergency housing issues, owner-occupied residences, etc.)

HOUSING CASES OPENED - 12

Twelve cases were opened and preliminary inquiries or investigations were conducted based on the allegations presented. Formal Complaints were not filed. The protected categories included:

- 3 Race *and* Color
- 2 Disability
- 2 Marital Status
- 1 Disability *and* Retaliation
- 1 Race, Color *and* Disability
- 1 Race, Color, Sex *and* Age

- 2 *Other (further inquiry revealed no legally protected status for filing)

HOUSING CASES CLOSED - 12

- 4 Determined to be Non-jurisdictional
- 2 Failed to Pursue
- 2 Insufficient Basis to file a Formal Complaint
- 2 Withdrawn
- 1 Filed Duplicate Complaints with the New York State Division of Human Rights

- 1 Other

COMMUNITY OUTREACH and EVENTS

During the year, the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission Members and Staff worked with numerous organizations and participated in many community events. By interacting with various groups on a regular basis, we are able to disseminate information to the public about the services our agency provides, increase the visibility of the Commission, and become more aware of the concerns of various communities; all of which is crucial to our mandate.

The Commission Members and Staff have always viewed outreach as a vitally important component of our mission, and throughout the year the Commission continued its commitment to maintain and foster a positive relationship with all the diverse communities in Suffolk County and to lend our assistance at the grassroots level. Below is a sample of our outreach activities in 2012:

We maintained a regular presence at the meetings of various community organizations including the ***Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board***, the ***Council for Prejudice Reduction***, ***The Dignity for All Students Committee***, the ***Suffolk County Hate Crimes Task Force***, and ***The Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity, & Human Understanding***, as well as monthly community meetings at various police precincts throughout the county. We also arranged to have tables at various other community events to display our brochures, flyers and other educational materials.

We participated in numerous educational and cultural events focused on human rights and highlighting diversity. Some of the events we attended in 2012 include:

- ❖ *The Suffolk Center on the Holocaust, Diversity, & Human Understanding Annual Luncheon*
- ❖ *The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Memorial Breakfast*
- ❖ *The Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center Public Interest/Government Job/Internship Fair*
- ❖ *The Stop the Hate Rally at the Masjid Noor Mosque in Huntington*
- ❖ *The Huntington Black History Month Celebration*
- ❖ *Town of Islip Black History Month Celebration*
- ❖ *The Half Hollow Hills Unity Fair*
- ❖ *Eastern Suffolk BOCES Annual Strategic Planning Council Meeting*
- ❖ *The Suffolk County Historical Society's event honoring Tuskegee Airman Lee Hayes*
- ❖ *We Are All Immigrants Symposium at the Centereach Library*
- ❖ *The Brentwood Public Library Organizations Fair*

- ❖ *The 4th Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration*
- ❖ *Suffolk County's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration*
- ❖ *Suffolk County Unity Day at the Huntington Cinema Arts Center*
- ❖ *India Fest, presented by the India Association of Long Island*
- ❖ *The Welcoming Long Island Campaign, an initiative of Long Island Wins*

PRESENTATIONS

The Staff of the Commission presents trainings about the Human Rights Law and the services our agency provides to various community groups, educational institutions, and businesses. In 2012, we made a presentation to new recruits at the ***Suffolk County Police Academy***.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In terms of staff development, in 2012 members of our investigative staff had the opportunity to attend a ***Law in the Workplace Conference*** hosted by the Suffolk County Bar Association, to receive training on investigative methods and important legal updates provided by the ***New York State Division of Human Rights***. We also attended a ***Grant Management System*** training.

The Impact of the Economy on Healthcare in Suffolk County

September 14, 2012
1pm to 5pm
First Floor Media Room
H. Lee Dennison Bldg.
100 Vets Memorial Hwy
Hauppauge, New York

Program

1pm Pledge of Allegiance
Greetings:
Rabbi Dr. Steven A. Moss
Remarks:
Hon. Kate M. Browning
Benediction:
Rev. Thomas Goodhue
Program Overview:
Augustus G. Mantia, M.D.

1:30 Keynote Address:
James L. Tomarken,
M.D., MPH, MBA, MSW

2:00 Panel Presentation:
Christopher Banks, MBA
Jessica Wyman, MBA
James D. Sinkoff, MBA, CPA
William J. Cunningham, III
Alan Schechter, MHA, CPA
Gary E. Bie, CPA

3:45 Open Hearing – Q&A

Summary

The Suffolk County Human Rights Commission held a healthcare forum focusing on significant health care delivery and access issues. The program included a keynote presentation by the Suffolk County Commissioner of Health Services, a panel presentation by representatives of major healthcare systems which provide service in Suffolk County, and an open forum with questions and answers from the public.

Special Guests

The Honorable Kate M. Browning

Suffolk County Legislator, Vice-Chair Health Committee

Rev. Thomas Goodhue, Executive Director

Long Island Council of Churches

Keynote Speaker

James L. Tomarken, M.D., MPH, MBA, MSW

Commissioner, Suffolk County Department of Health

Panelists

Christopher Banks, MBA

VP for Development and External Relations,
Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center

Jessica Wyman, MBA

Manager of Program Development,
Catholic Health Services of Long Island

James D. Sinkoff, MBA, CPA

Chief Financial Officer, Hudson River HealthCare

William J. Cunningham, III

VP, Government and Community Affairs,
North Shore – LIJ Health System

Alan Schechter, MHA, CPA

Executive Vice President, Peconic Bay Medical Center

Gary E. Bie, CPA

Chief Financial Officer, Stony Brook University Hospital

The Suffolk County Human Rights Commission

Commission Members

Rabbi Dr. Steven A. Moss,
Chairperson

Lynda Perdomo-Ayala, LMSW,
Vice Chair

Michelle Bonnie Cannon
Rachel Lee Davis
Michele T. Del Monte
Mark J. Epstein, Esq.
Augustus G. Mantia, M.D.
Gary R. Mar, Ph.D.
Carolyn G. Peabody, Ph.D.
Rajeshwar Prasad
Hafiz ur Rehman, M.D.
Luis E. Rodriguez, Esq.
Luis Valenzuela, Ph.D.
Dionne Walker-Belgrave
Yu-wan Wang, Ed.D.

Staff

Jennifer Blaske, Esq.
Executive Director

Lorena Gonzalez, Investigator

James L. Kokindo, Investigator

www.SuffolkHumanRights.org

Front cover design by Lisa J. Krauss

The Suffolk County Human Rights Commission

(631) 853-5480

Hauppauge Office

(Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm)

**H. Lee Dennison Bldg.
100 Veterans Memorial Highway
P.O. Box 6100
Hauppauge, NY 11788**

Riverhead Office

(by appointment)

**Riverhead County Center
310 Center Drive
Riverhead, NY 11901**

www.SuffolkHumanRights.org

The SCHRC's objective is to work toward the elimination of bias and discrimination. We investigate complaints alleging violations of federal, state, and local human rights laws, mainly in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodation.

If you have been a victim of discrimination because of your race, color, creed, religion, national origin, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, military status, arrest or conviction record, or predisposing genetic characteristics, or because you are a victim of domestic violence, please call our office to speak with an investigator or contact us through our website.

We also provide training and technical assistance to organizations and individuals to promote and encourage voluntary compliance with the law and to promote positive intergroup relations.